

First, our K-12 schools are already burdened with a host of responsibilities, and, as indicated in the report, many are already struggling to fulfill these charges. I believe that it is counterproductive to add social and health obligations that may only serve to shift the focus of schools away from teaching the fundamentals of knowledge. Schools are not one-stop social service centers, nor should they be. Schools should concentrate on education and should focus their attention on teaching world class curriculum. They should not be forced to address childhood factors that are the responsibility of parents, or serve as de facto childcare providers. While I can agree that there should be a safety net that targets early education efforts for at-risk children, I do not believe that folding these programs into the existing K-12 structure is the right approach.

Second, Universal Preschool and incorporated social programs are tremendously costly endeavors that would significantly detract from other educational needs. The anticipated cost of providing just preschool for all children three and four years of age is in excess of \$2 billion annually. While an augmentation to education funding may be something that is feasible in financially sound years, during a fiscal crisis, the state has traditionally funded education at, or sometimes less than, the minimum guarantee established by Proposition 98. If Universal Preschool and other schemes were included in this guarantee, a significant amount of financial support would be funneled away from our K-12 system. This is very disconcerting, especially given that the Master Plan has noted that financial resources are already spread too thinly at many of our schools.

Finally, while the Committee has opined that Universal Preschool is geared towards at-risk kids from socioeconomically challenged families, the Master Plan makes no distinction between advantaged and disadvantaged children when recommending the availability of Universal Preschool. It is free for everybody, regardless of one's ability to pay. This amounts to a direct subsidy to the many parents who can afford and do pay for childcare. Welfare for the middle class should not be a component of this plan.

I strongly believe that this Master Plan should focus on the K-12 system before expanding in directions that may or may not result in any substantive improvement in performance.

Multi Track Year Round Education

I sincerely appreciate the attempt by the Committee to address my concerns about Multi Track Year Round Education. However, I believe that the issue is insufficiently addressed. First, it is inappropriately included under the sub-category of "Access to Adequate Learning Support Services." Multi Track is not about learning support services. Multi Track is about packing kids into inadequate facilities by assigning them into "tracks" that attend school at differing times throughout the year. While one track is in school, another track is on vacation. Multi Track was supposed to be a short-term solution to alleviate the need for facilities augmentation, but it seems to have become a permanent reality for California schools. Operational grants that once were touted as making Multi Track affordable have dwindled, resulting in significant district costs. There are also concerns that Multi Track programs adversely impact the educational experience of our students.